

**Introduction of Joe Maxwell, Lt. Governor, State of Missouri for Presentation to
John Baskette, Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, Inc.**

**VETERANS BENEFITS AWARENESS TASK FORCE
MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION
Monday, November 19, 2001 — 10:00 AM
Central Office Headquarters — 1719 Southridge Drive
Jefferson City, MO**

I. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

- A. In attendance: **Barbara Bundy**, Womens Veterans Coordinator
Regional Office Dept. Veterans Affairs; **Sandi Davenport**, Public Affairs
Officer Regional Office Dept. Public Affairs; **Phillip Driskill**, Executive Director
Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs; **John Eckhoff**, Veterans Service Manager
St. Louis County Dept. of Human Services; **Ralph Durnbaugh**, Director Veterans
Benefits Awareness; **Joseph Frank**, Member Missouri Veterans Commission; **Bill
Groninger**, Executive Director, Branson Veterans Task Force; **Lt. Governor Joe
Maxwell**, State of Missouri; **Bonnie McNeill-Boyt**, Training Technician, Missouri
Veterans Commission; **Samuel McVay**, Executive Director, Missouri Veterans
Commission; **Jim Morris**, Director Public Information, Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education; **Carl H. Niewoehner**, Chairman, Missouri Veterans Commission;
Paul Pealer, Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans of MO; **John Robinson**, Chief of
Staff, Lt. Governor's Office; **Jane Rustemeyer**, Public Information Manager, Missouri
Veterans Commission; **General Shull**, State of Missouri, Adjutant General Office; **Stan
Smith**, Administrator Warrensburg Home; Missouri Veterans Commission; **Jill Talken**,
Executive Secretary, Missouri Veterans Commission; **Ronald Taylor**, Associate
Director, Missouri Veterans Commission; **Tuck VanDyne**, Lt. Governor's Office; **James
(Jim) Whitfield**, Western Area Coordinator MO Military Funeral Homes; **Gary
Williams**, Director, Regional Office Dept. Veterans Affairs; **Greg Barnes**, Deputy
C.O.S, Governor's Office, **Hal Dulle**, Assistant to the Director, Missouri Veterans
Commission.

- B. Mr. McVay welcomed the task force members and thanked all being there. Mr. McVay addressed the task force and explained the purpose of the task force. He stated that this initiative will have as its sole purpose, the acquisition of VA earned benefits for Missouri Veterans while maximizing Federal VA dollars in the States economy.

- II. Lt. Governor, Joe Maxwell, welcomed the task force to the inaugural meeting of the Veterans Benefits Awareness Task Force. Lt. Governor, Maxwell stated the task force goals are to design a set action plan and develop a sustained program to increase the number of Missouri veterans receiving their "earned" benefits. The task force goal is to develop the means by which to deliver those messages and prepare to receive applications. In order to accomplish this goal we must make benefits available and accessible by:
1. Increase number of applications
 2. Raise awareness to public

- III. Mr. McVay presented to the task force a power point presentation of Veterans Benefits facts and statistics.

Four Task Groups were organized as follows:

1. Messages Development Committee
2. Messages Delivery Committee
3. Response to Application Committee
4. Resource Development Committee

These groups will work together in determining:

- A. A common message
- B. Who to distribute the message
- C. How to process the applications
- D. Funding

Lt. Governor Maxwell recommended:

1. The task force stays open to everyone
2. Beneficial training sessions to all service representatives and service organizations, and to respect opinions of all organizations not on the task force
3. Joint Service Officer Meeting

- IV. Presentation of Oklahoma Model – Phillip Driskill, Director, Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Driskill distributed information that the State of Oklahoma Veterans Affairs Office provides to their Veterans. He informed the task force that Oklahoma has developed ways to reach the Veterans through state benefits booklets, posters at post offices, County Commissioner Office and Court Houses, Wal Mart, Website, Public Service Announcements, Newspapers, Television, Veterans Organizations, and the setting up of two 1-800 numbers to call for Veterans assistance. Another item he indicated Oklahoma State has a Veteran Program in which they visit area schools and help to teach patriotism to students. The State of Oklahoma also makes available to troops prior to release from the base a service officer to speak with them about disease, injuries and veterans programs. He stated the bottom line to increasing veteran's application for benefits is highly trained services officers, this can met by designing service officers training courses. Training Officers must keep Veterans informed. We must sustain a program, put resources behind it, and move forward.

- V. Ron Taylor, Associate Director, Missouri Veterans Commission reported to the task force a survey was sent to all states asking for input on Veterans Benefits Awareness. Missouri Veterans Commission received brochure items and other helpful information from states to get VBA out to the pubic. Veteran's Benefits Supermarkets which would involve Veterans and Veterans Organizations, private organizations and VA support has been beneficial to some states.

- VI. Appointment of Chairman:

James Whitfield made a motion to appoint Lt. Governor Joe Maxwell to Chair the Veterans Benefits Awareness Task Force. John Eckhoff seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

James Whitfield made a motion to appoint Sam McVay, Executive Director, Missouri Veterans Commission as Vice-Chairman. Hal Dulle seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

- VII. Lt. Governor Maxwell announced the breakout sessions for the four task groups to meet immediately following and closed the meeting.